

# *Life's a Hoot!*



*The International Owl Collectors' Club,  
54 Tiverton Road, Edgware, Middlesex, HA8 6BE, England.*

Welcome to issue seven. I'm happy to say our postal crisis has been solved by Michael Hamilton, one of our English members. He works in the post room of a huge multi-national company and they have agreed to let us put our 'outside Europe' mail into their bulk postage. This means we get a very good deal on the price of each item, and it takes about the same time as ordinary air mail.

If you are an 'outside Europe' member, you may notice that your envelope looks a little different - it will be franked instead of having stamps and will have a postmark from within your country, as the mail is sent in bulk and then posted on by the courier company.

Thanks must go to all the people who offered to do the postage in their countries - you are all great! This method seems to be the cheapest and easiest for me ( just one lot of money to pay with no foreign currency problems) and we can go back to our original subscription rates for most places - £2.50 in Britain, £3 in Europe, \$6 for America and other zone 1 destinations and £4 or \$7 (American \$) for Australia and other zone 2 destinations. I can take American dollars because I have an American bank account. Can I please make it clear that it is of absolutely no use at present to send a cheque for \$A (Australian dollars) made out to me, as my bank charges about the equivalent of \$A10 to change it! If you cannot get Pounds or American dollars just send something owly, even if you have to make it yourself. I've been asked to put the equivalents in other currencies for items in 'Owls seen around' and other articles, but I don't because most places can't take foreign currency for the same reasons, so there's no point sending it. If you see something you really want and can't cope with changing money, write to me and I'll try to help.

We have a member in yet another country - Fiji. We certainly do get around. With this issue you will find a list of all the current members (we have lost a few because they didn't renew, despite being asked at least twice) with the exception of those who specifically asked to be left off of such a list. I'm hoping that as well as writing to each other (and to me, of course), you will try to arrange a get-together in your area if there are any other members near enough. You may find that near is a relative term - the Bloks from Holland came to the meeting I had last year, and I hope to have another one this Spring. I will be writing to all the Europeans about it, but if you are from elsewhere and will be in England in the next few months do let me know! Even if you miss the meeting you are always welcome to come and see my collection.

Now read on

*Elise*



## Owls For Sale

No hand-made owls this time, as I've been busy and no-one else has offered any.

However, could the person in America who ordered embroidered tissue boxes from Beryl Scrutton which they have not yet received please write again, as she has lost your name and address. Her address is 55 Sandringham Gardens, North Finchley, N12 0NY, England.

## Barney Auction

**This is Barney the owl, who is the symbol of children's events at a London Arts Centre called the Barbican. He is red and blue. We have the following items for auction: one mug with Barney on both sides, four shaped plastic badges (buttons, the Americans would say) size as shown, one white 'baseball' cap (adjustable) with him on the front and one T-shirt (fit 11-12 year old) which shows Barney and which is UV sensitive so that it changes colour in the sun.**

**The auctions work like this - if you'd like an item, you send me a note (before the end of March) saying which one(s) you want and how much you are offering for it (them). I then send the items to the people who have made the best offers and they**

**must then send the money. I can only accept £ and American \$, but you can offer any owly item - just state its value - if changing currency is too difficult. All money from these auctions goes to the owl-related charities we support.**



## Swap Shop

Rowena has a few owls she would like to swap for others. They are:

A Chinese cloisonne figure of a black owl, about 6cm (2.5") tall

A Chinese cloisonne, multi-coloured, 4cm (1.5")

A Swarovski Silver crystal figure (shown) 5cm (2") tall.

If you would like to offer a swap, write to:

Rowena Cook-Lau

Stafan-George-Ring 9

D-81929 Munich

Germany





## Owl Collecting - Second Hobby or First?

by Gordon H. Almburg

By the middle of the 1970s, I had become an avid Plate collector. About this time, I had built a home in Western Broward County (South Florida). There was a vacant field next door inhabited only by cows and Burrowing Owls. I didn't think too much about it and actually placed mounds of dirt for landscaping along my curving driveway. The first thing I knew, the little owls were making tunnel home nests in these mounds. They looked so cute that I began bringing them small pieces of raw meat and left over dinner scraps. It wasn't long before I began to notice



them waiting for me to come by. Eventually, they seemed to know me and I could come to within 6 feet before they would move. Anyone else couldn't get within 50 feet. Little by little, I began to pick up owl figurines and then branched out to other owl items. Items vary from 50 cents to \$2,100.00. My collection today, between my home in Hollywood, Florida, and my home in Highlands, North Carolina, numbers 298 Owl items. They include small ceramics, plaster, china, porcelain, wood and one hand-carved solid mahogany

owl 18" high. I also have some deer horn, pewter and tin....even one made from a pine cone. The collection includes an owl nest door mat, cookie jars, a mold for making an ice sculpture, spoon rest, salt and pepper shakers, a hand-made bedspread with my "Mr Plate" and owl logo, some owl clocks and many other items. Two things that I do not have are a stuffed owl and an owl lamp. Someday, I will. All 298 items are catalogued with a number and a picture of each. My catalogue sheet also gives information as to where I obtained the item, the cost, date, composition and size. I also do the same with my 750 piece plate collection.





# The Owl and the British Post Office

by W. T. Clover, Spain

Only two Great Britain stamps have featured owls, the 19p 'Owl and the Pussy-cat' stamp from the 1988

Edward Lear set and

the 17p stamp

from the

1986

Nature

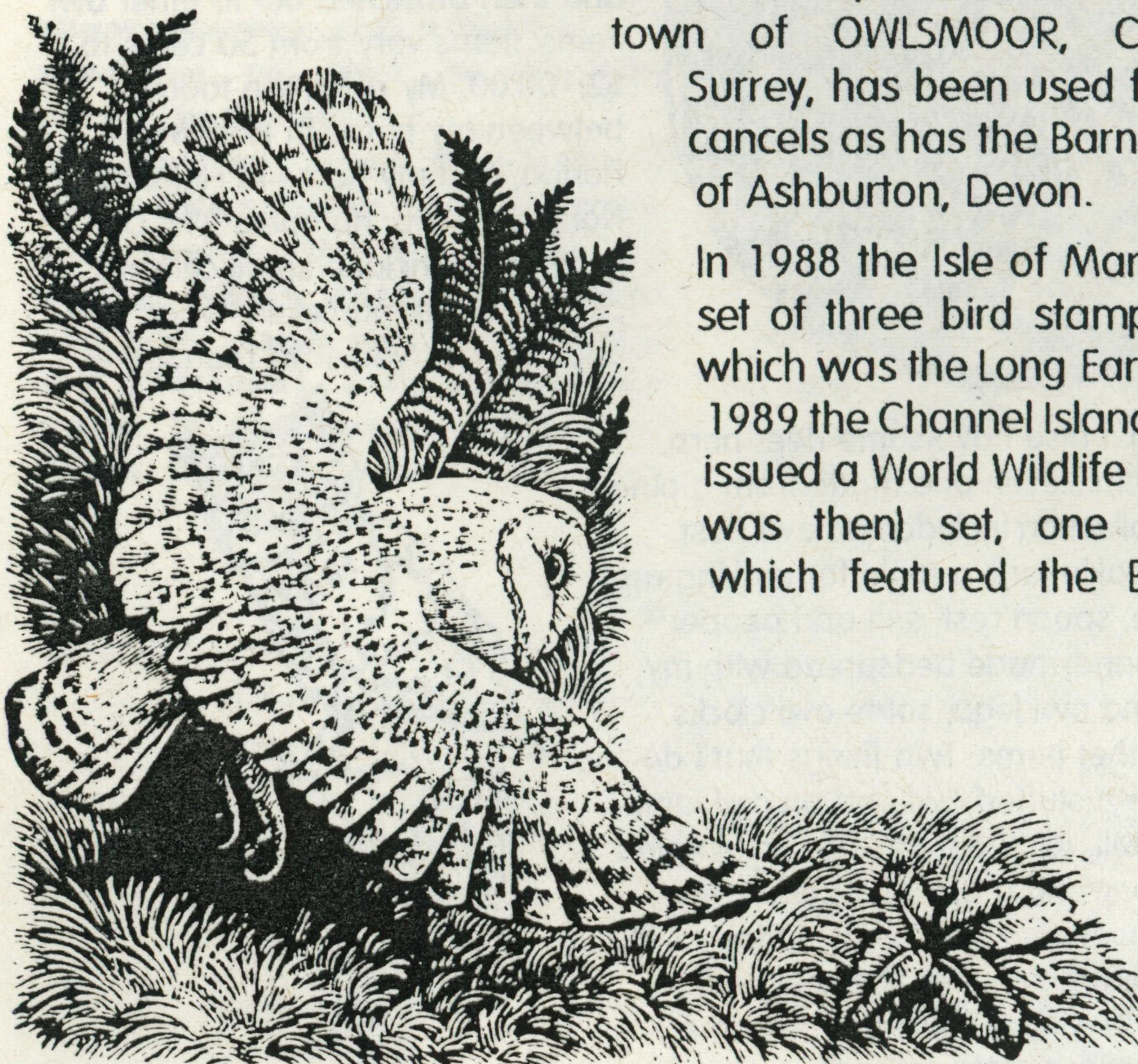
Conservation set, which shows a Barn Owl.

The Royal Mail First Day Cover for this issue, designed by David Driver, shows a black and white drawing of a Barn Owl swooping low over undergrowth.

The Barn Owl was also depicted on the cover of a 1969 booklet of 18 4d stamps; the stamps themselves were the ordinary Queens head "Machins". However, for the owl collector the

town of OWLSMOOR, Camberley, Surrey, has been used for special cancels as has the Barn Owl Trust of Ashburton, Devon.

In 1988 the Isle of Man issued a set of three bird stamps, one of which was the Long Eared Owl. In 1989 the Channel Island of Jersey issued a World Wildlife Fund (as it was then) set, one stamp of which featured the Barn Owl,



NATURE CONSERVATION - SPECIES AT RISK

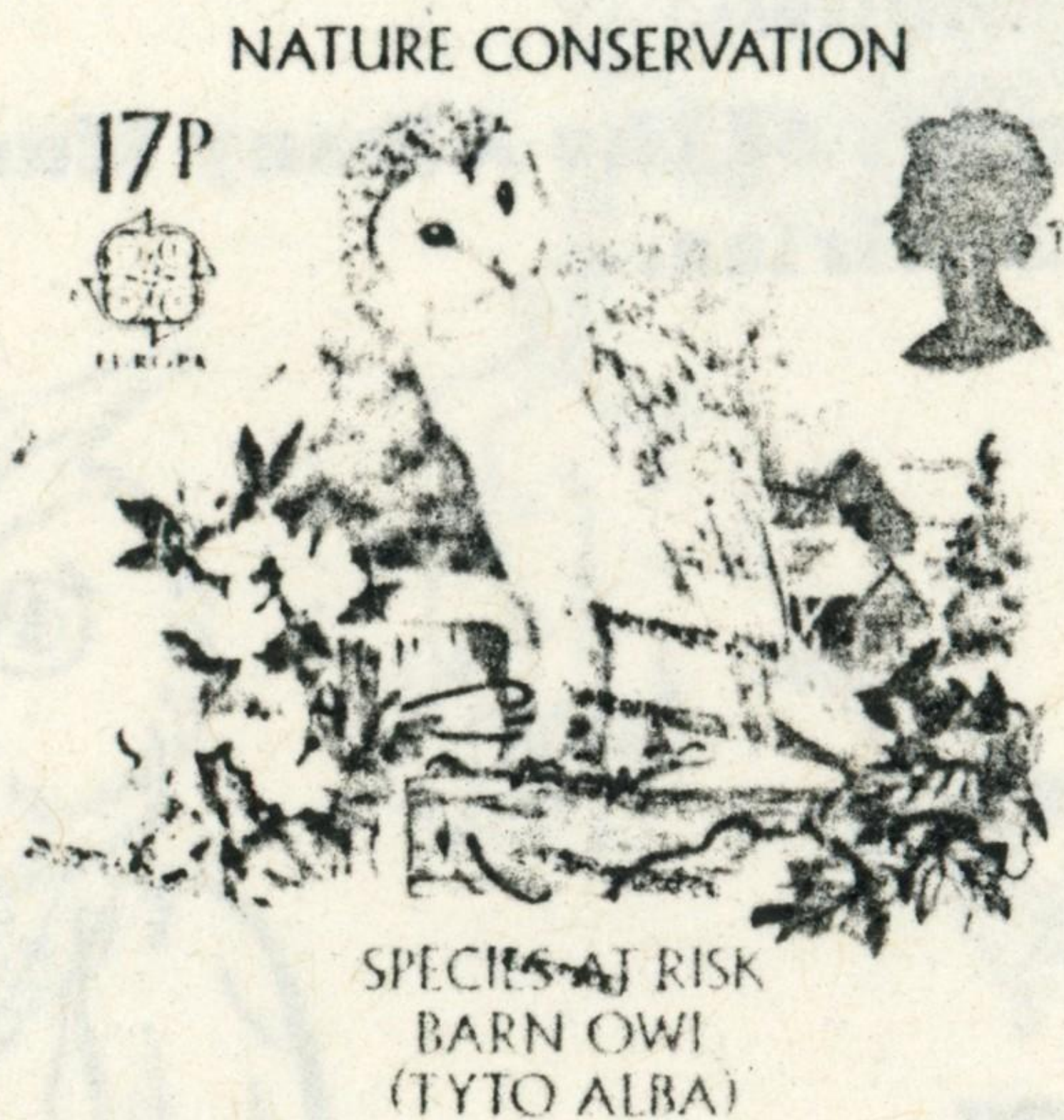
ROYAL MAIL FIRST DAY COVER



The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea  
In a beautiful pea-green boat,

EDWARD LEAR • 1812-1888



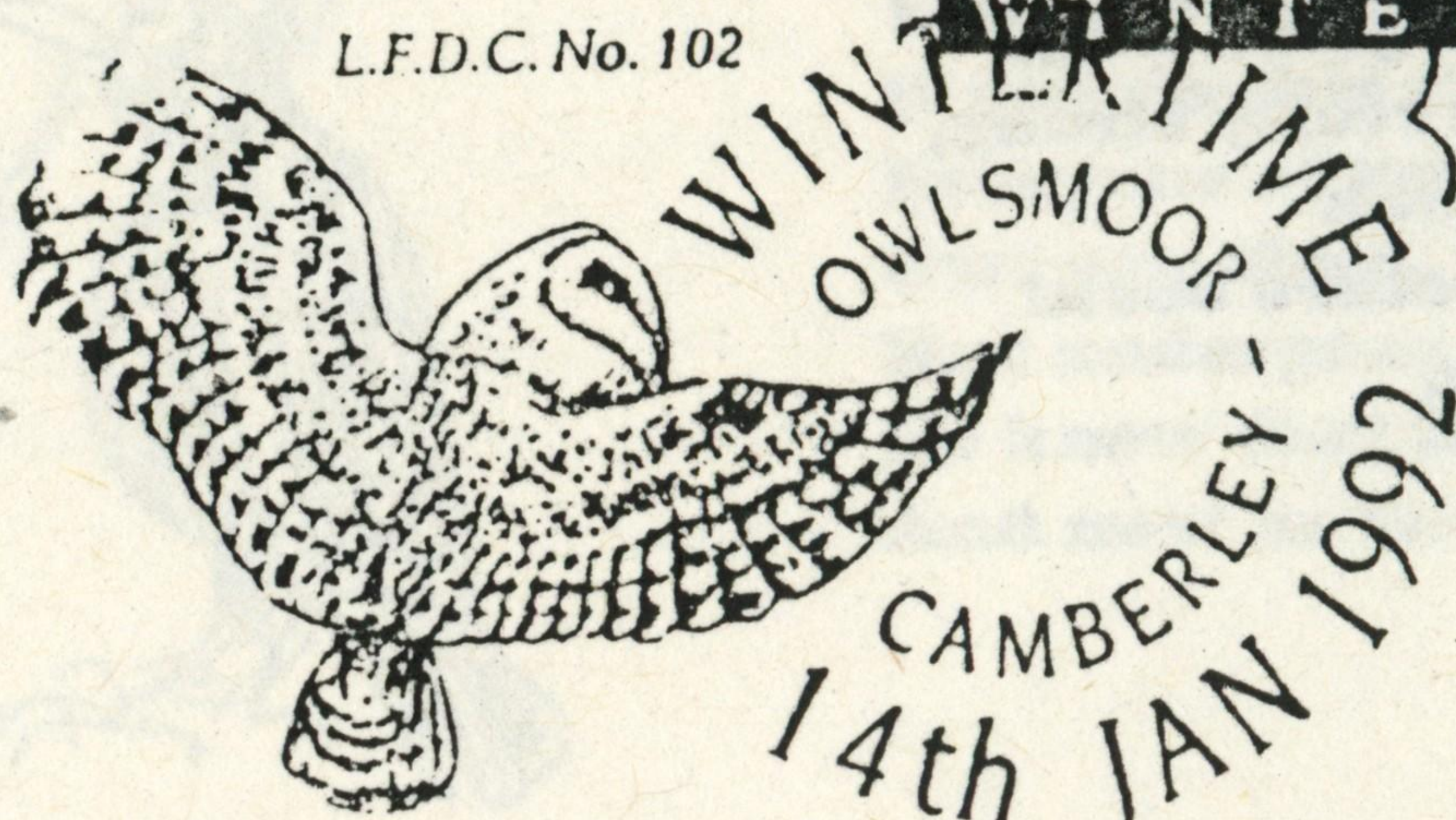
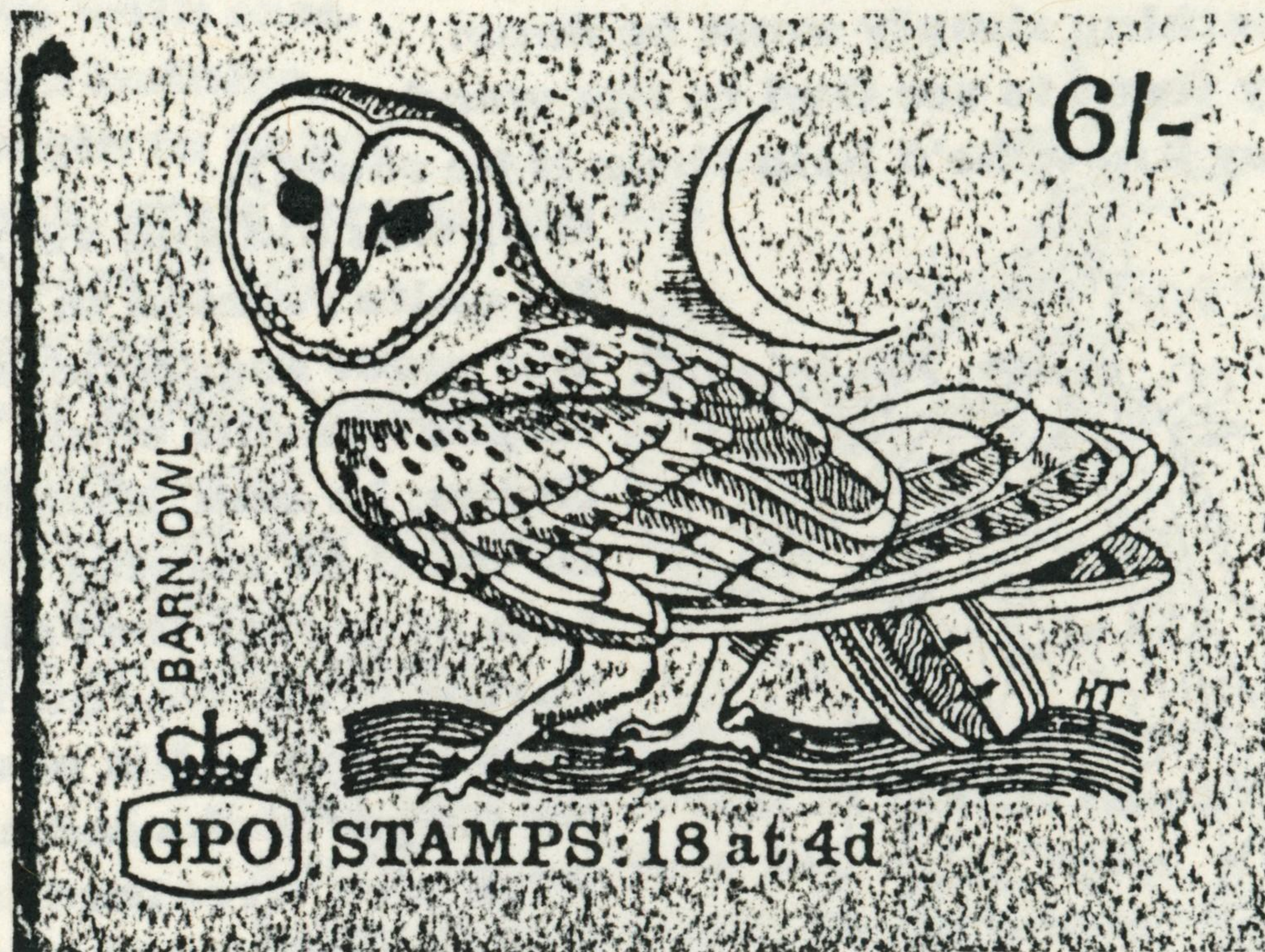


and in 1990 another Channel Island, Guernsey, issued a block of 12 Christmas stamps showing winter birds and again the Barn Owl was shown. Incidentally they also produced a series of Christmas cards based on these designs.

P.S. from Elise

On the subject of owl post marks, I have recently heard (through my rubber stamp connections) that it is

possible to send a stamped, addressed letter to an American town's postmaster and get him to frank it with his town's mail. To do this you need to use the town's Zip code and add (I think) 9999 to the end. If someone will look up the Zip codes of any towns with Owl in the name (and I've been told of at least two) and send them to me I could try this out and let you know if it works!





## **The Early Days**

**From Animal Fun, Fact and Fiction by Dorothy Sülter,**

**Drawings by John English.**

**Permission to reprint given by the Trustees of the Albany Museum,  
Grahamstown, South Africa.**

**Very, very long ago  
When all the world was ice and snow,  
The creatures in those far off days  
Were different and they looked for ways  
To change their looks to catch the eye  
Of any who were passing by.  
Some necks were short, some legs too long,  
Birds just croaked and had no song.  
The Hippo was quite small and thin,  
The Giraffe short and hardly slim!  
The Elephant was also small  
And Jackal had no voice at all!  
They decided, one by one,  
Something simply must be done!  
They went to see Owl in the wood  
(They knew he'd help them if he could).**



**Owl was old and very wise  
He quite refused to criticise,  
But made suggestions as to where  
Improvements could be brought to bear.  
Hippo, he said, should put on weight;  
He must be careful what he ate.  
Lots of greens Owl did suggest,  
Saying grass was quite the best.  
Now Hippo in his new round form  
No longer looks sad and forlorn;  
With face wreathed in a jolly smile  
He can conduct himself in style!  
Giraffe, Owl thought, should gain in  
grace.**

**This could be done at quite a pace  
By giving up a life of ease  
And reaching to the top-most trees,  
Especially now, in early Spring,  
Those new green shoots are just the thing.**

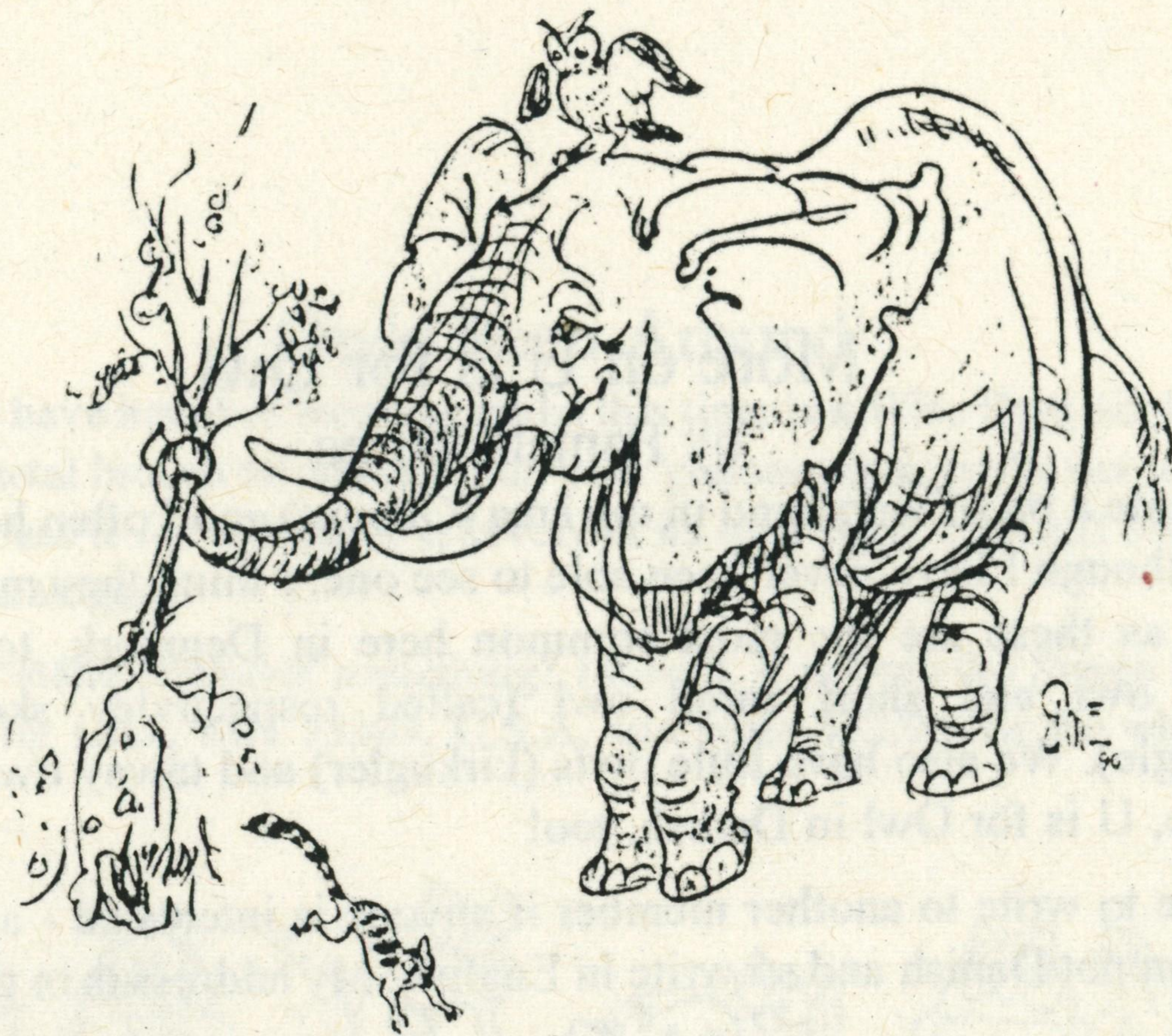
**Giraffe followed Owl's advice,**

**He found the shoots were crisp and nice.**

**By stretching up his neck grew long,  
His legs, though thin, got really strong,  
In fact he soon began to look  
Like something from a picture book!  
Elephant was next in line,**







To him Owl said, "you don't look fine!  
 It's no use to weep and sulk  
 You simply must increase your bulk.  
 If you make more use of that trunk  
 There's nothing you should fear nor funk.  
 Pull up the grass, push down the trees  
 This you will achieve with ease.  
 If, in this pastime you indulge,  
 Your muscles will begin to bulge!  
 You'll gain in strength, grow strong and tall  
 And be the biggest beast of all!"  
 Jackal next, was very sad  
 When Owl said, "Your throat looks bad!  
 If your voice-box I must mend  
 Your tonsils must come out, my friend."  
 Owl then summoned Dr Stork  
 Who came along with pruning fork!



Poor Jackal just dissolved in tears;  
 This was the worst of all his fears!  
 Stork said, "Now you open wide,  
 I simply must look down inside."  
 Suddenly with wrench and shout  
 Jackal's tonsils were pulled out.  
 Now Jackal to his great delight  
 Can call to all his friends at night!  
 Finally the birds flew in,  
 Those that croaked and couldn't sing.  
 They came with payment for the Owl  
 But were greeted with a scowl.  
 "Save your cents - I don't need money;  
 Your cure will be to eat some honey!  
 If you do this simple thing  
 Everyone of you will sing!"  
 Owl was tired, he felt his brain  
 Had undergone sufficient strain.  
 He knew that he had done his best  
 And now he would enjoy a rest.





## More on U is for Owl

by Pamela Burge

We have quite a bit of woodland in my area (Odense) and I often hear owls hunting after dark, though I have never been able to see one. I think they must be barn owls (slørugler) as these are the most common here in Denmark, together with the long-eared owl and short eared owl (called respectively skovhornugle and mosehornugle). We also have little owls (kirkugler) and tawny owls (natugler). As you can see, U is for Owl in Danish, too!

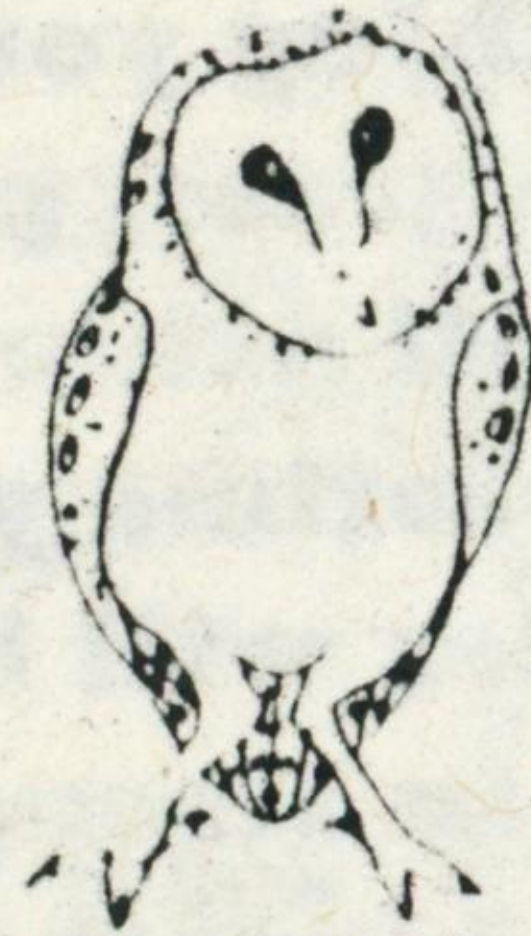
I would like to write to another member if anyone is interested - although I live in Denmark I'm not Danish and so write in English. My address is in the members list.

### *The Craft Spot*

More jewellery using rubber stamps, this time with oven-bake clay such as Fimo or Super Sculpy. Choose a metallic colour for an interesting effect (copper is good for owls) and knead it until it is soft. Roll out a sheet about an eighth of an inch thick (about a third of a centimetre) thick and stamp an owl firmly into the clay to make an indented image. Don't use ink! Remove the stamp carefully, without rocking it. If you don't get a clear image the first time, knead and roll the clay again. Cut out around the image with a craft knife and bake in the oven following the instructions on the packet. Don't overheat the clay as it can give off fumes if you do. When your item is cool, use fine sandpaper (such as an emery board) to smooth off any rough edges that might be left and then rub the back too, to give the glue a good surface to work on. Stick a pin-back on and you have a brooch! I've also made tie-clips this way as well as pendants and earrings by making a hole in the clay before baking. Rubber stamps with mainly lines rather than areas of colour work the best.



### **Special Offer!**



BARNY BOOKS

Barney Books, who publish Molly Burkett's charming books, are offering us three paperback books for £5, including postage and packing in the U.K. These books are "An Owl from Pompeii", "Two's Company" (also about an owl) and a book about a Kestrel. If you are outside the U.K. you must send extra for postage, or write to me and I'll sort it out. The profits from the books go to Molly and co. who are wildlife rescuers and specialise in owls, so if you can afford it send extra money as a donation towards helping our favourite creatures.



## Owls Seen Around

The only item I have heard of from Australia this time is a Wise Eyes pin being sold by Avon - it is a metal brooch which can hold your glasses when you're not wearing them. I'm not sure I'd use it for that but it is lovely in its own right. I haven't seen this in the British Avon catalogues!

Isn't this rubber stamp alphabet something? I love it. It is from the Stamp Pad Co. Inc., P.O. Box 43, Big Lake, MN 55309, U.S.A. and costs \$12.95 for the whole alphabet



unmounted (you have to put it on wood yourself) in the small size shown. They also have individual letters at the larger size at \$5 and other owls in the catalogue. The larger one shown was a Q but I just liked it so I carved the letter off. They take most credit cards, and that is a good way to pay because it means you can buy from anywhere and they can calculate the postage and charge you for the whole thing.

At last, news of an owl cookie cutter, which is something I've been looking for for a long time. This one is particularly good because it is not just the shape of an owl but features as well, which are imprinted into the cookie. I don't know how much they cost, but they are available from Cookie Craft, P.O. Box 295, Hope, New Jersey 07844, U.S.A.

This cute pin (brooch) was hand made by Thomas Freese, 2903 Liberty Road, Lexington, KY 40509 4338 U.S.A. It is wood with the pattern burnt on to it and it is wonderfully smooth and very nice to wear. He hopes to have more owl designs soon. The pin costs \$19.00 + \$2 for postage and packing in a padded envelope.

For the cross-stitchers amongst us, there are four designs available from Christian Crafts, 180 Oakend Way, Gerrards Cross, Bucks., SL9 8BR, England. They are called "The Tawny Owl and the Wisdom of Solomon" and cost £5.35 including p&p (U.K. - add more p&p if elsewhere). Quite a few beautiful but more expensive cross-stitch kits are available from Eva Rosenstand, Saffron Walden, P.O. Box 22, Essex, CB10 2XZ, England - telephone England 07992 5703 for a catalogue.

Due to Athena, many owls can be found at The Greek Shop, 6 Newburgh Street, London W1V 1LH, England.





## Charity Corner

As you may remember, last year we adopted an owl nest box for the Hawk and Owl trust. We unfortunately didn't get any owls nesting in it this year, but we did provide somewhere for a pair of Kestrels to raise a brood of three healthy babies who left the nest last July. If there is any other word of these birds we will be told. We've re-adopted for this year, and have been sent some owl pellets in return (as well as some new pictures and information which I'll put in the newsletter when I have space). I doubt I'd be allowed to send these out of the country, due to postal regulations, so I'm offering them to the first four British members to write asking for one. I know some of you can get these all the time, but those of us who never ever get to see a wild owl are interested in such things. Actually they arrived without any documentation (the letter was in the next post) and I was quite taken aback when I opened the parcel, as it took me a moment to realise what they were.



Do you live anywhere near Wolstenholme Fold, Norden, Rochdale, OL11 5UD? If so could you help out at the Three Owls Bird Sanctuary, where our adoptees Barny the Barn Owl and Mop Chaser the Tawny Owl live? They



are desperate for help as the lady who runs the sanctuary isn't as young and fit as she was and cannot manage to do all she has been doing for many years. If you can't help physically, you could join them as a friend for £6 per year and get their newsletter.

The owl shown on the back cover is the Rusty Barred Owl I've adopted for the last few years at London Zoo - they recently got him a mate so I'm hoping for babies as the Zoo has a good reputation for breeding.





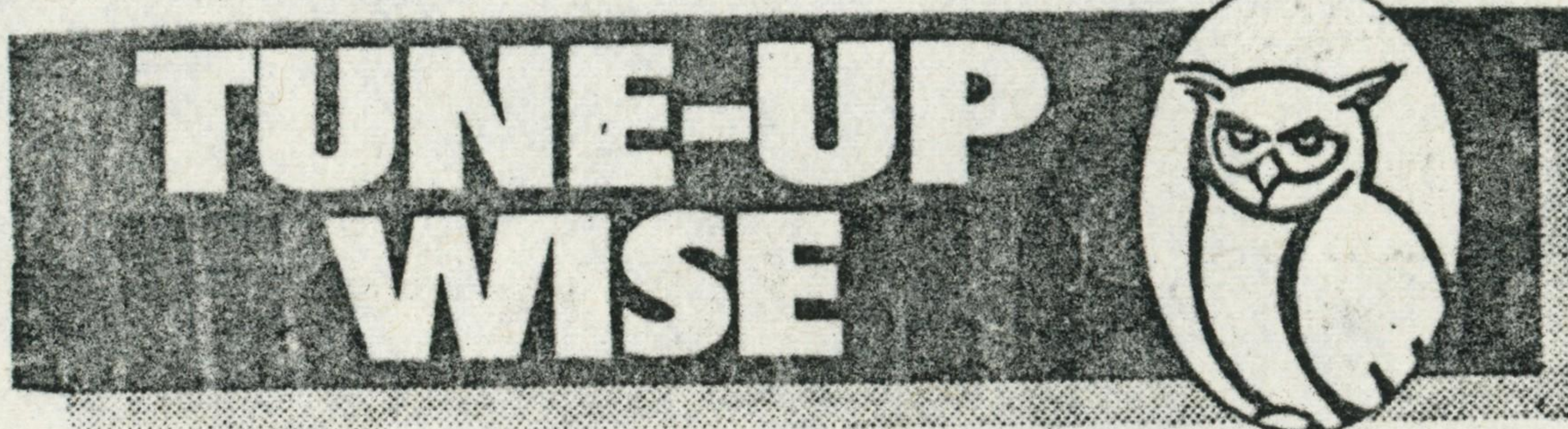
## Advertising Owls.

Due to its association with wisdom, lots of companies like to use owls as their symbols or in their advertising. I'd like to make this the theme for our next newsletter, so

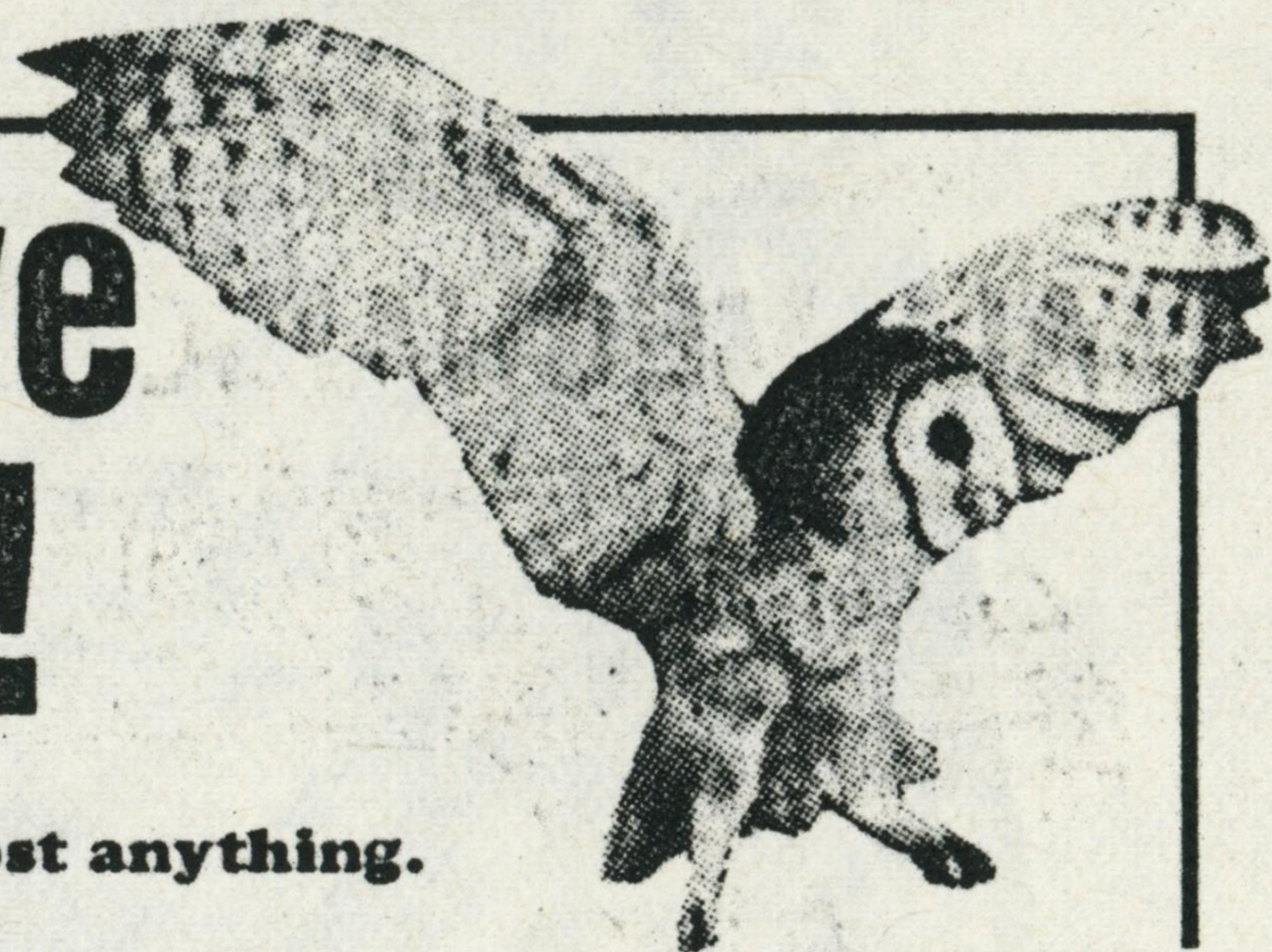
send any examples you have (or photocopies) to me by March, along with any other information on them, especially if they are not in English. To give you a little taster, here are three owl-ads, sent to us from Australia by Stephen Pickles. These are for motor services and insurance, but look out also for

opticians, banks, bookstores and indeed almost anything.

THE WORKCOVER INCENTIVE SCHEME FOR EMPLOYERS



We give  
a hoot!



## More on Owly Ships

by Tom & Lyn Meadows, USA

Hi! I found some information on USS Otus - unfortunately the name has nothing to do with owls. If I find anything on USS Owl, I'll send it in. There was also a USS Sea Owl, SS405, which served in WWII. We have a reproduction patch from her, but don't know anything about her.

In late 1940 or early 1941, the SS FRED MORRISS of the Lykes Line made her maiden voyage from the Gulf to Japan with a load of aviation fuel and lumber. After discharging her cargo she was ordered into the U.S. Naval Shipyard at Cavite, Philippine Islands for acquisition by the U.S. Navy. She was commissioned sometime in March as the U.S.S. OTUS (AS-20), the 20th submarine tender in the U.S. Navy. The ship was named after the star OTUS, as all submarine tenders at that time were named after stars, such as the CANOPUS, ORION etc. Up to the end of WWII, it was easy to tell what a ship was if you knew her name - Battleships were named after states, heavy cruisers after state capitals, submarines after fish and vessels in the mine force after birds. ( *Perhaps the USS Sea Owl was a Mine Force Ship, then.* )

Later on, when the Navy needed a vessel to maintain and repair landing craft she was redesignated an ARG. General Repair Ship, following the landing craft North from all the New Guinea harbours.

*Well! I think this just means we need to know why the STAR is called OTUS (as Otus Scops, the long eared owl) or what exactly OTUS means. Any ideas?*



